

THE PATH OF DARKNESS

STAR WARS

MARVEL 48

SOULE
MORALES
ROSENBERG



RATED T

THE PATH OF DARKNESS

After an arduous trial for Lando Calrissian, it is time for the rebels to focus on the war against the Empire.

But while one hero of the Rebellion makes peace with their past, another still struggles with great loss....

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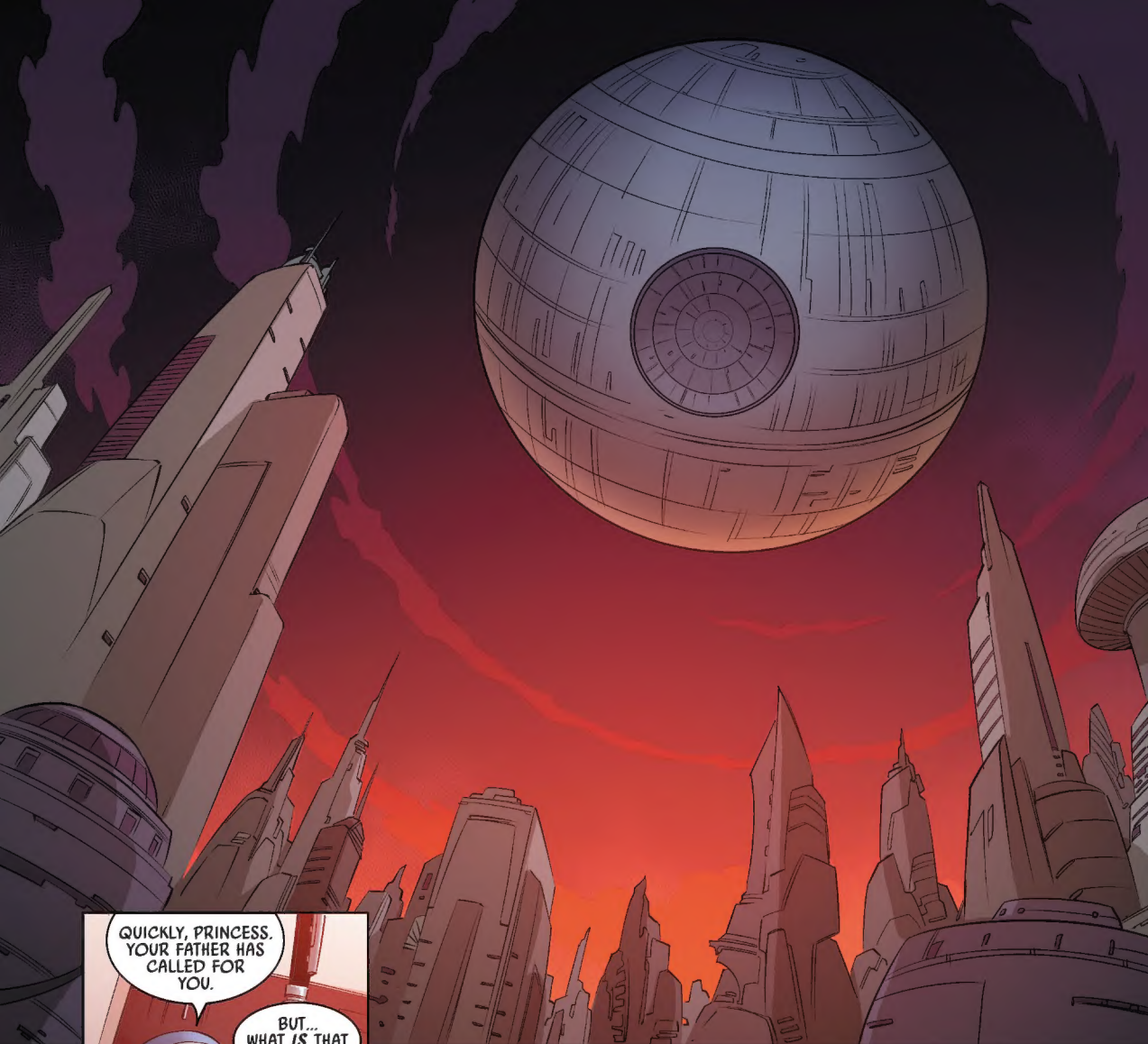
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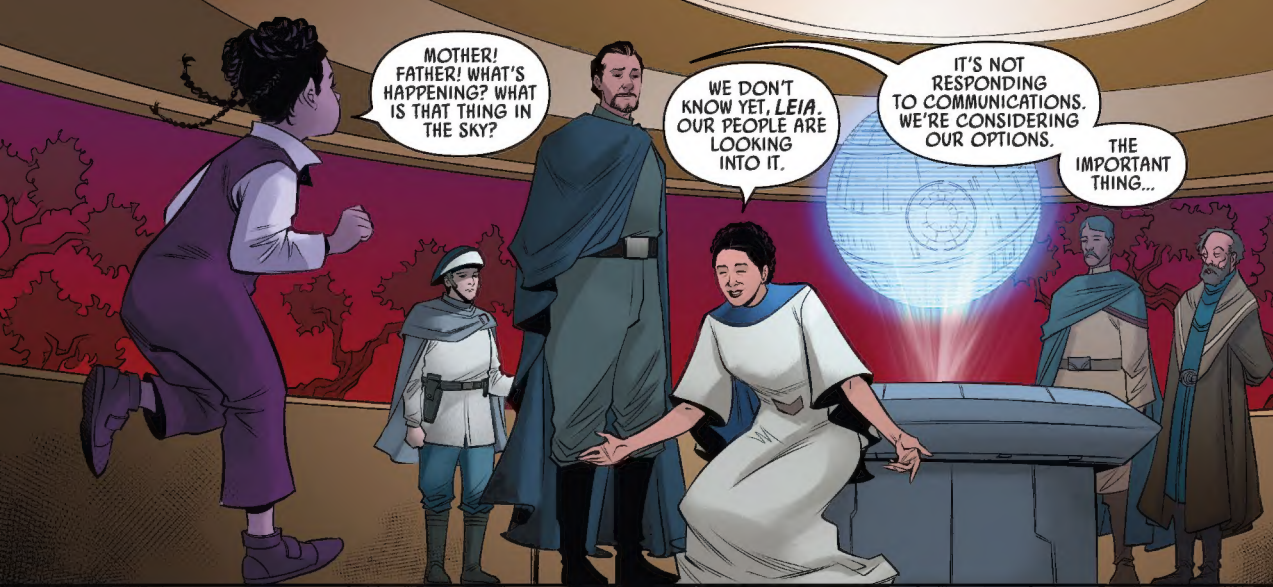
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The Royal Palace
of Alderaan.







MOTHER!
FATHER! WHAT'S
HAPPENING? WHAT
IS THAT THING IN
THE SKY?

WE DON'T
KNOW YET, LEIA.
OUR PEOPLE ARE
LOOKING
INTO IT.

IT'S NOT
RESPONDING
TO COMMUNICATIONS.
WE'RE CONSIDERING
OUR OPTIONS.

THE
IMPORTANT
THING...



...IS
THAT WE'RE ALL
TOGETHER.

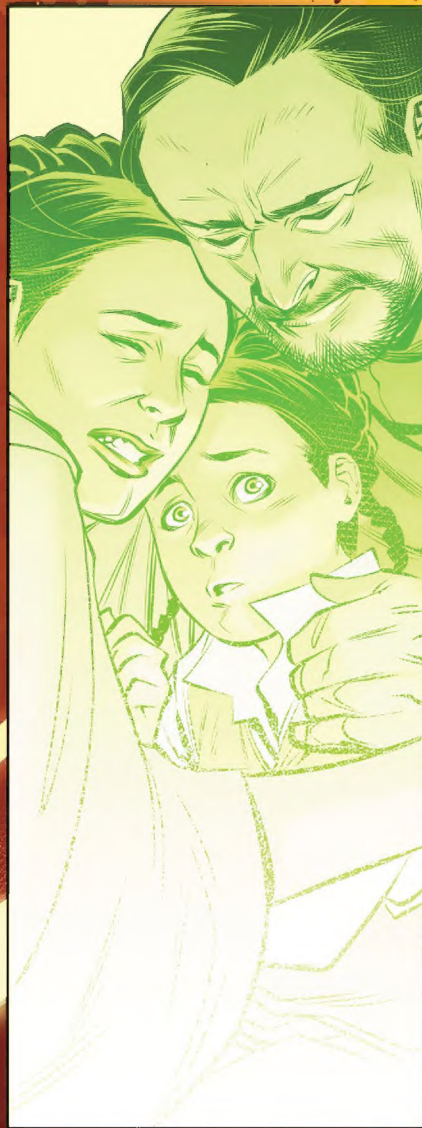


THIS WAS
YOUR DECISION,
PRINCESS. YOU COULD
HAVE PREVENTED IT
AT ANY TIME.

BUT YOU
DID NOT. AND
SO NOW...



...YOU WILL
FIRE WHEN
READY.



Home One.
Rebel Alliance
flagship.

AHH!

YOUR HIGHNESS,
I HEARD A SOUND
OF ALARM FROM
YOUR CABIN.

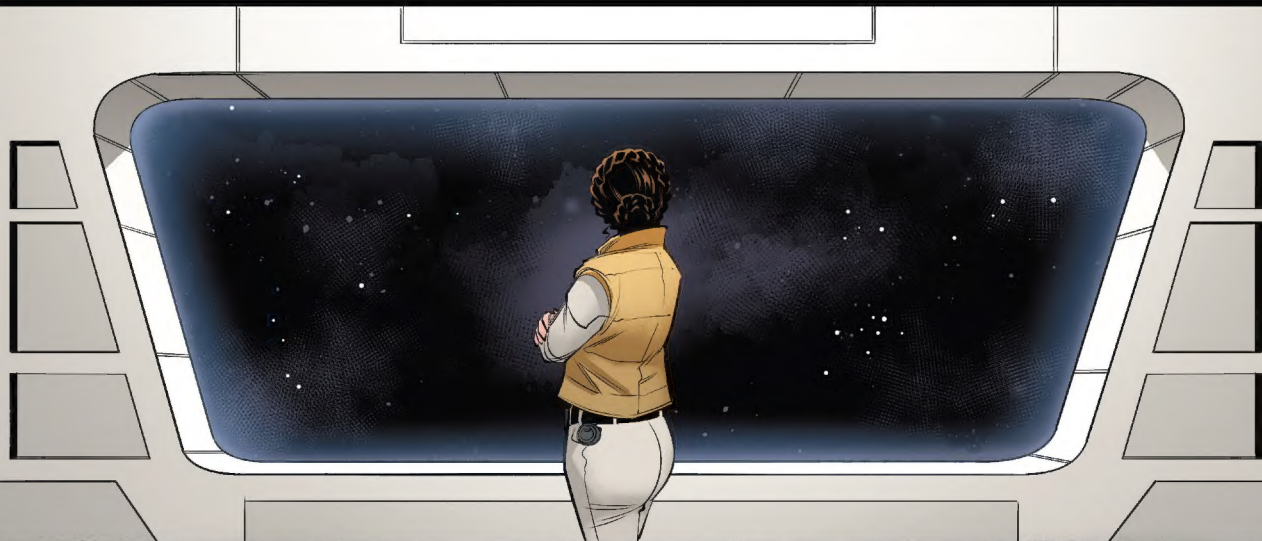
IS ALL WELL?
SHALL I SUMMON
ASSISTANCE?

I'M FINE,
THREEPIO. JUST...
A BAD DREAM.

VERY WELL. IF YOU HAVE
NO FURTHER NEEDS AT
THIS TIME, I WILL POWER
DOWN UNTIL THE END
OF YOUR SLEEP CYCLE.

I DON'T
THINK I'M GETTING
MUCH MORE SLEEP
TONIGHT, THREEPIO. BUT
THERE IS SOMETHING
YOU CAN DO
FOR ME.

TELL LUKE
SKYWALKER I'D
LIKE TO SPEAK
WITH HIM.



LEIA.



LUKE, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING. I HOPE I DIDN'T DISTURB YOUR REST.

NOT EVEN A LITTLE, LEIA. I WAS UP LATE STUDYING. BUT IS SOMETHING WRONG?



I SENSE...
HMM.



THIS IS WHAT YOU'RE SENSING, LUKE.

I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN DO THIS ANYMORE.

I KEEP THINKING ABOUT HAN. AFTER WHAT LANDO TOLD US AT HIS TRIAL-- THAT HE MIGHT HAVE AN IDEA ABOUT HOW TO RESCUE HAN FROM JABBA...

...THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO DO. I DON'T CARE ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE.

LEIA, THAT'S NOT TRUE. YOU CARE MORE THAN ANYONE I'VE EVER MET.

ABOUT EVERYONE.

I'VE BEEN DREAMING ABOUT ALDERAAN, LUKE. HORRIBLE DREAMS. IT'S LIKE I'M THERE, ON THE PLANET, AS IT BURNS.

AND IT WAS MY FAULT. YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT? IF I'D MADE DIFFERENT DECISIONS IN THE MOMENT, SAID DIFFERENT THINGS TO TARKIN AND VADER...

...ALDERAAN MIGHT STILL EXIST. MY...MY FAMILY MIGHT STILL BE...

HEY, NO.

YOU WERE IN AN IMPOSSIBLE POSITION, AND FROM WHAT YOU SAID, THE EMPIRE WOULD HAVE DESTROYED ALDERAAN NO MATTER WHAT YOU DID.

YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT EVIL, LEIA. YOU'RE JUST NOT.

YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK IT IS? THE EMPIRE IS BUILDING **ANOTHER** DEATH STAR, AND I KNOW THE ALLIANCE WILL HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO DESTROY IT. WE'RE WORKING ON PLANS RIGHT NOW.

BUT WE LOST SO MANY PEOPLE DESTROYING THE FIRST ONE... WHO KNOWS IF WE'LL SUCCEED? WHO KNOWS IF I'LL EVEN SURVIVE?

THAT'S WHY I'M HAVING THESE DREAMS. THEY'RE TELLING ME MY TIME IS ALMOST UP.

I WANT TO RESCUE HAN BEFORE THAT **DEATH STAR** MISSION. I WON'T HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE.

YOU CAN'T KNOW THAT. EVEN THE **FORCE** CAN'T PREDICT THE FUTURE. IT'S ALWAYS SHIFTING, CHANGING.

I DON'T KNOW IT...I FEEL IT, AND THEN I FEEL SO SELFISH FOR WANTING TO SAVE HAN INSTEAD OF PUTTING ALL MY ENERGY INTO THE REBELLION.

NOTHING MATTERS MORE THAN DEFEATING THE EMPIRE. NOTHING.

I HAVE TO BE PRINCESS SENATOR GENERAL LEIA ORGANA OF ALDERAAN, INSPIRATION TO THE ENTIRE REBEL ALLIANCE. I WAS RAISED TO BE THIS. I KNOW HOW TO DO IT. BUT...



...SOMETIMES... THIS IS ALL TOO MUCH.

I KNOW, LEIA. BELIEVE ME. SOMETIMES, I FEEL EXACTLY THE SAME WAY.

YOU KNOW I'LL BE RIGHT THERE WITH YOU WHEN WE GO AFTER HAN, NO MATTER WHEN IT HAPPENS. BUT FOR NOW, HOW CAN I HELP?

JUST BEING ABLE TO TALK ABOUT THESE THINGS MEANS A LOT. THERE AREN'T MANY PEOPLE I CAN BE A PERSON WITH, NOT JUST A SYMBOL.

YOU MADE THE SHORT LIST. LUCKY YOU.

THAT'S RIGHT, LEIA.

LUCKY ME.

YOUR HIGHNESS, THIS IS EVAAN VERLAINE.

WE NEED TO MEET. I'M IN THE HANGAR.

IT'S ABOUT ALDERAAN.



EVAAN--
IT'S GOOD TO
SEE YOU.

GOOD
TO SEE YOU
TOO, PRINCESS.
YOU AS WELL,
SKYWALKER.

IT'S BEEN
A WHILE SINCE
WE'VE FLOWN A
MISSION TOGETHER.
WE SHOULD FIX
THAT.

COULDN'T
AGREE MORE,
LIEUTENANT
VERLAINE.



WHAT'S HAPPENING,
EVAAN? YOU MENTIONED
ALDERAAN?

IT'S ABOUT
THE **SURVIVOR**
FLEET, LEIA.

SURVIVOR
FLEET?



NOT LONG
AFTER THE DESTRUCTION
OF ALDERAAN, THE EMPIRE
MADE A CONCERTED
EFFORT TO HUNT DOWN
AND KILL ANY
SURVIVORS.

EVAAN AND
I WENT ON A SERIES
OF SECRET MISSIONS
TO WARN AND PROTECT
ANY OF OUR FELLOW
REFUGEES THAT WE
COULD FIND.

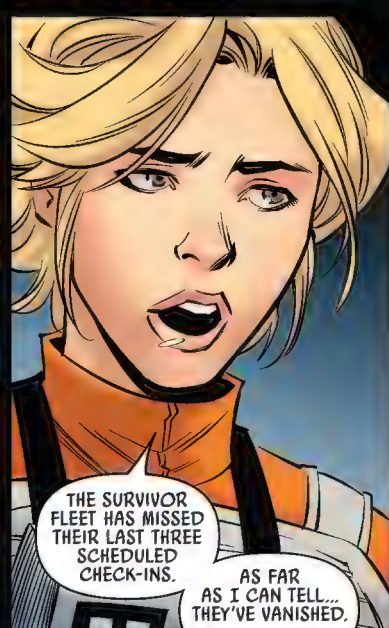
THE
SURVIVORS--
THOUSANDS--
GATHERED TOGETHER
IN A SMALL FLEET
OF STARSHIPS.

THEY'VE BEEN
WANDERING EVER SINCE,
KEEPING A LOW PROFILE,
STAYING OFF THE EMPIRE'S
SENSORS.



EVAAN WAS
THE SOLE POINT
OF CONTACT WITH THE
ALDERAANIANS. EVEN I
DON'T KNOW WHERE
THEY ARE.

THAT'S
THE PROBLEM,
LEIA. NEITHER
DO I.



THE **SURVIVOR**
FLEET HAS MISSED
THEIR LAST THREE
SCHEDULED
CHECK-INS.

AS FAR
AS I CAN TELL...
THEY'VE VANISHED.





THE ALDERAANIANS COULD ALL BE WIPED OUT IN A SINGLE STRIKE IF THE EMPIRE FINDS THEM.

THEY STAY AWAY FROM WELL-TRAVELED SHIPPING LANES AND ONLY SEND OUT RESUPPLY MISSIONS WHEN THEY HAVE TO.

IT MAKES SENSE, EVAAN.

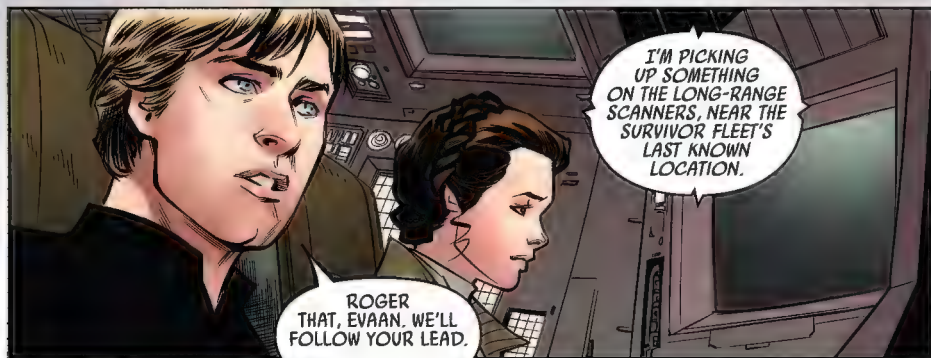
WHOA. THIS IS THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.

THAT'S THE IDEA, LUKE.



I JUST WISH IT DIDN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY. TOUGH WAY TO LIVE.

ALL THE MORE REASON WE HAVE TO WIN THIS FIGHT, LUKE. MY PEOPLE WILL NEVER HAVE A CHANCE UNLESS THE EMPIRE FALLS.

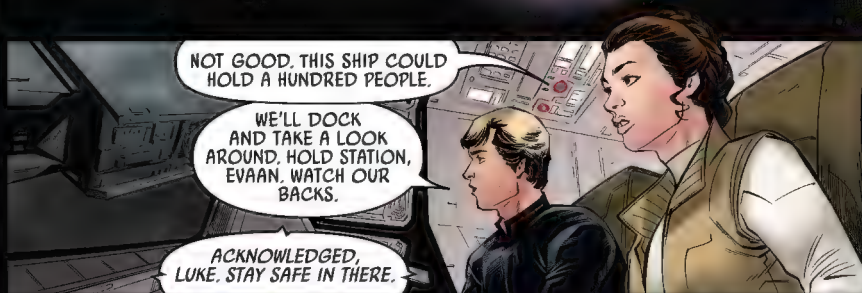


I'M PICKING UP SOMETHING ON THE LONG-RANGE SCANNERS, NEAR THE SURVIVOR FLEET'S LAST KNOWN LOCATION.

ROGER THAT, EVAAN. WE'LL FOLLOW YOUR LEAD.

THAT'S ONE
OF OURS. THE
THRANTA.

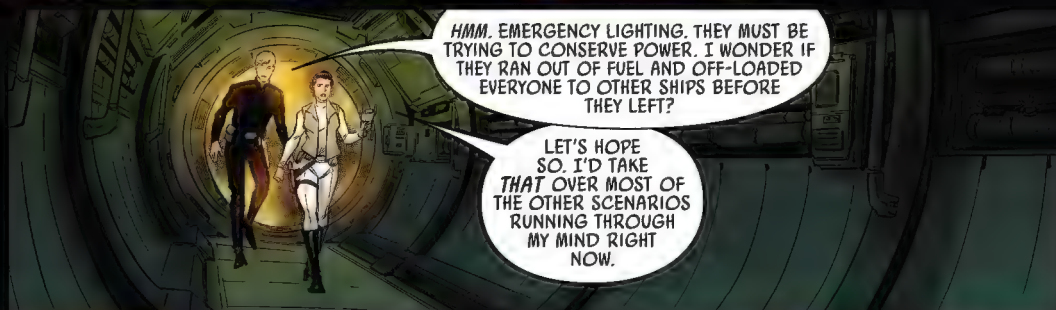
I'M GETTING
LIFE SIGNS...OR A
LIFE SIGN, I GUESS. ONE
PERSON, TWO AT MOST.
THEY AREN'T ANSWERING
MY COMMS REQUESTS
THOUGH.



NOT GOOD. THIS SHIP COULD
HOLD A HUNDRED PEOPLE.

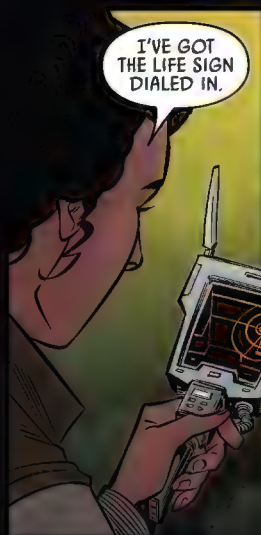
WE'LL DOCK
AND TAKE A LOOK
AROUND. HOLD STATION,
EVAAN. WATCH OUR
BACKS.

ACKNOWLEDGED,
LUKE. STAY SAFE IN THERE.



HMM. EMERGENCY LIGHTING. THEY MUST BE
TRYING TO CONSERVE POWER. I WONDER IF
THEY RAN OUT OF FUEL AND OFF-LOADED
EVERYONE TO OTHER SHIPS BEFORE
THEY LEFT?

LET'S HOPE
SO. I'D TAKE
THAT OVER MOST OF
THE OTHER SCENARIOS
RUNNING THROUGH
MY MIND RIGHT
NOW.



I'VE GOT
THE LIFE SIGN
DIALED IN.



IT'S THIS
WAY.



NOW WE
KNOW WHY
EVAAN'S COMMS
WEREN'T BEING
ANSWERED.

LUKE...
I THINK I
KNOW WHO
THIS IS.



THIS IS JORA ASTANE.
SHE CALLED HERSELF
THE PRESERVER.

SHE WAS
WORKING VERY
HARD TO SAVE
EVERYTHING SHE
COULD OF
ALDERAANIAN
CULTURE.

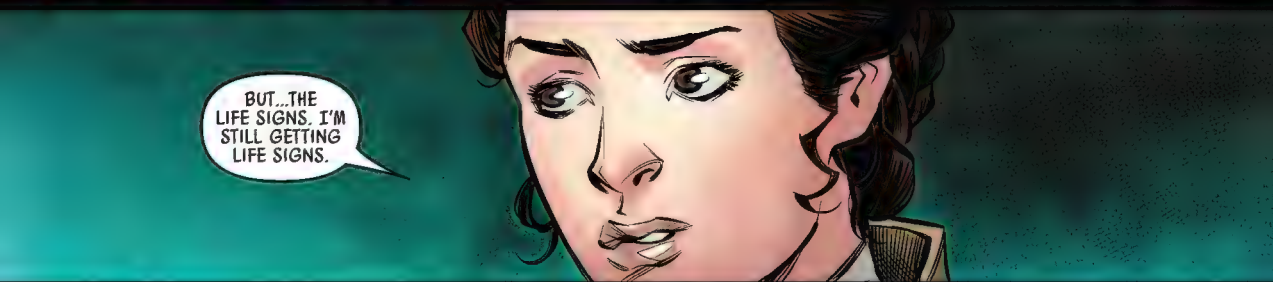
MAYBE SHE
WAS TOO BADLY
HURT WHEN THE
OTHERS LEFT--SHE
COULDN'T BE
MOVED.



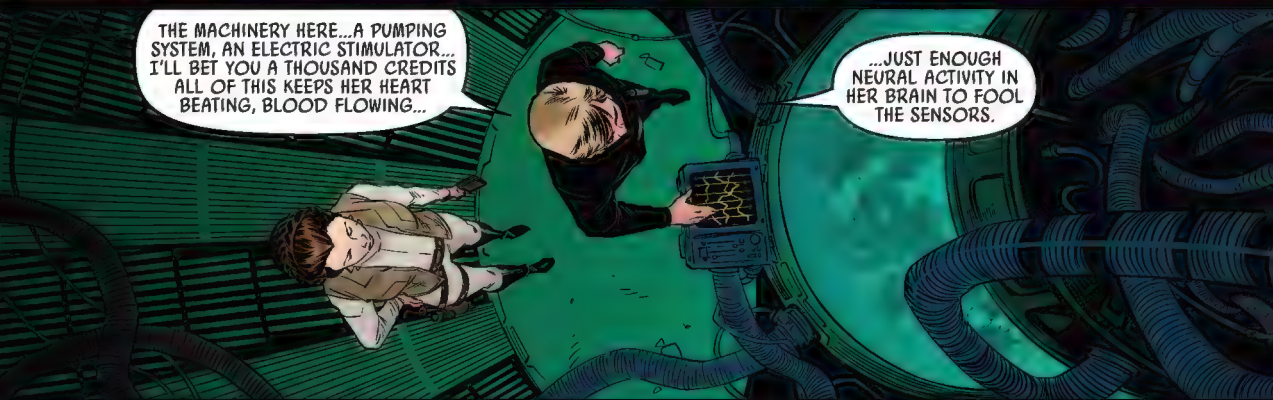
LEIA...
...THERE'S
SOMETHING
WRONG
HERE.



THIS
WOMAN IS
DEAD.



BUT...THE
LIFE SIGNS. I'M
STILL GETTING
LIFE SIGNS.



THE MACHINERY HERE...A PUMPING
SYSTEM, AN ELECTRIC STIMULATOR...
I'LL BET YOU A THOUSAND CREDITS
ALL OF THIS KEEPS HER HEART
BEATING, BLOOD FLOWING...

...JUST ENOUGH
NEURAL ACTIVITY IN
HER BRAIN TO FOOL
THE SENSORS.



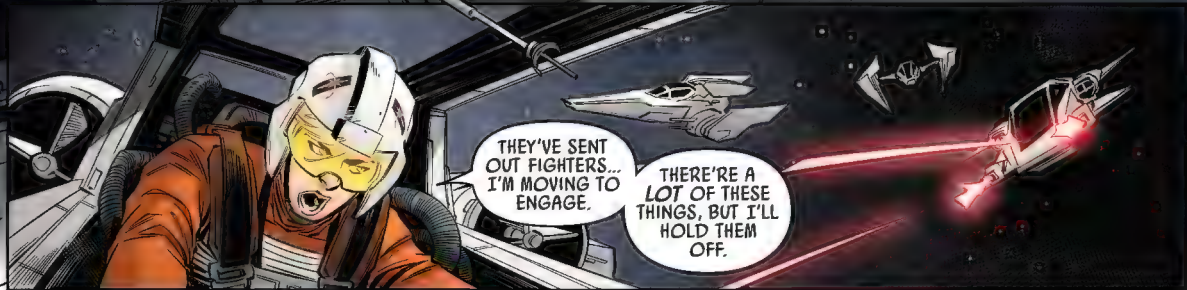
BUT THE
FORCE DOESN'T
LIE. THERE'S NO
LIFE HERE.

THAT
MEANS...SHE
WAS LEFT HERE
AS BAIT.



LEIA! LUKE!
GET BACK TO YOUR
SHUTTLE!

WE'VE GOT
SHIPS OUT HERE...
RAIDERS, MAYBE...
DROPPING OUT OF
HYPERSPACE.





AGH!

LEIA!

LEIA, STAY
AWAKE. I'LL
GET YOU TO
THE MEDBAY.
YOU'RE GOING
TO BE ALL
RIGHT.

NNGH...

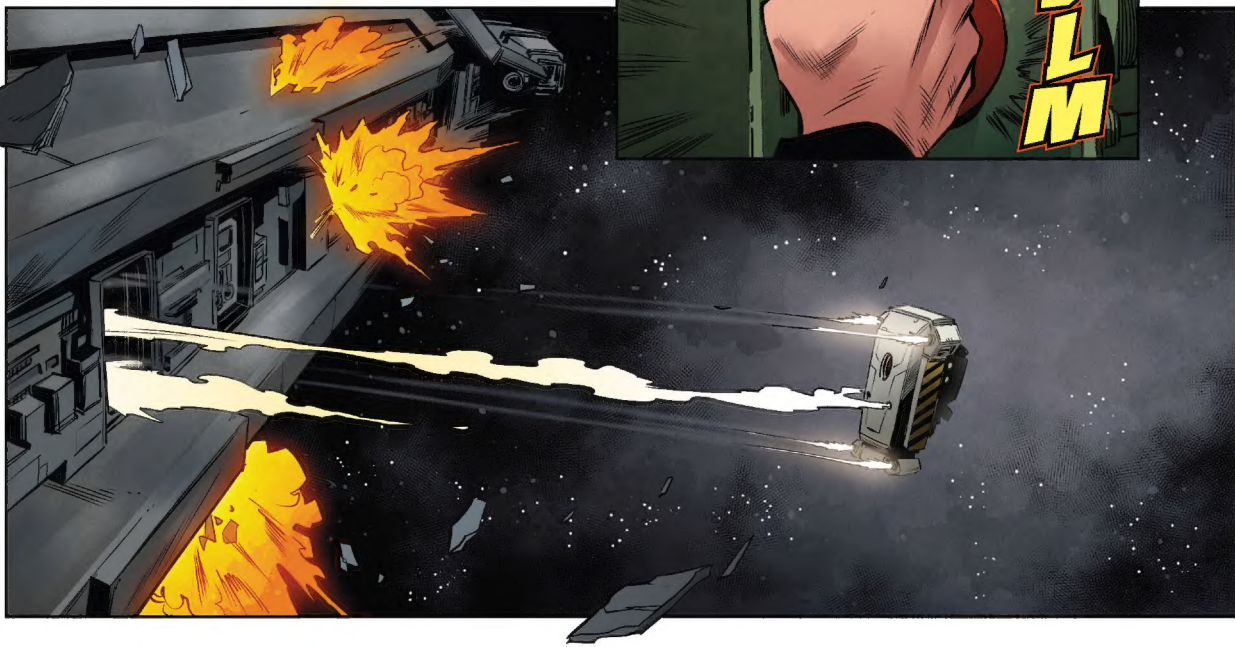
THEY
JUST LANDED A
BOARDING PARTY!
WATCH YOUR
BACKS!

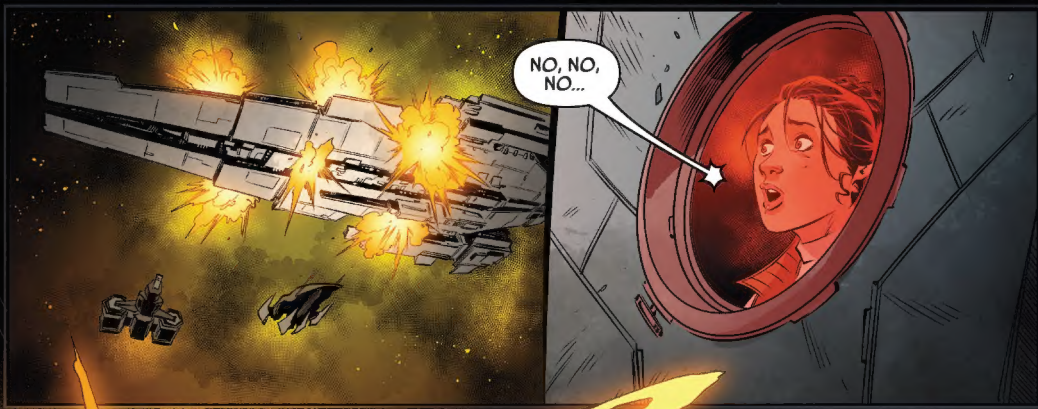
WONDERFUL.

ZZZ

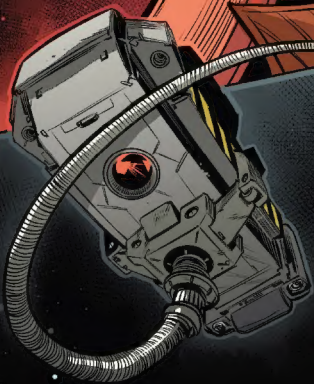
ZZZ

WING





...WHAT?





NEXT

STAR WARS 49



THE SAGA ALSO
CONTINUES IN...



STAR WARS
48



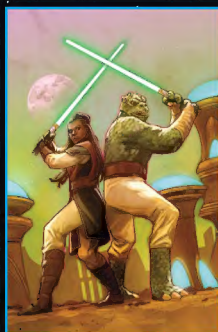
STAR WARS
DARTH VADER 48



STAR WARS
AHSOKA 1



STAR WARS
DARTH MAUL - BLACK,
WHITE & RED 4



STAR WARS
HIGH REPUBLIC 9



STAR WARS
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